IN THE UNTED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

NANCY DAVILA 557 Lindley Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19120 : CIVIL ACTION

Plaintiff, : No.:

v.

: JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

PETSMART, INC. D/B/A PETSMART 1745 W Bethany Home Rd. Phoenix, AZ 85015

Defendant.

CIVIL ACTION COMPLAINT

Nancy Davila (*hereinafter* referred to as "Plaintiff," unless indicated otherwise) by and through her undersigned counsel, hereby avers as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. Plaintiff has initiated this action to redress violations by PetSmart, Inc. d/b/a PetSmart (*hereinafter* "Defendant") of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VII" – 42 U.S.C. §§ 200d *et seq.*), the Equal Pay Act ("EPA"), the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act ("PHRA"), and the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance ("PFPO"). As a direct consequence of Defendant's unlawful actions, Plaintiff seeks damages as set forth herein.

¹ Plaintiff's claims under the PHRA and PFPO are referenced herein for notice purposes. She is required to wait 1 full year before initiating a lawsuit from date of dual-filing with the EEOC. Plaintiff must however file her lawsuit in advance of same because of the date of issuance of her federal right-to-sue-letter under Title VII/. Plaintiff's PHRA and PFPO claims however will mirror identically her federal claims under Title VII.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 2. This Court has original subject matter jurisdiction over the instant action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343(a)(4) because it arises under the laws of the United States and seeks redress for violations of federal laws.
- 3. This Court may properly assert personal jurisdiction over Defendant because its contacts with this state and this judicial district are sufficient for the exercise of jurisdiction over Defendant to comply with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice, satisfying the standard set forth by the United States Supreme Court in *Int'l Shoe Co. v. Washington*, 326 U.S. 310 (1945), and its progeny.
- 4. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1392(b)(1) and (b)(2), venue is properly laid in this district because Defendant is deemed to reside where it is subjected to personal jurisdiction, rendering Defendant a resident of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.
- 5. Plaintiff is proceeding herein under Title VII after properly exhausting all administrative remedies with respect to such claims by timely filing a Charge of Discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC") and by filing the instant lawsuit within ninety (90) days of receiving a notice of dismissal and/or right to sue letter from the EEOC.

PARTIES

- 6. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
 - 7. Plaintiff is an adult individual, with an address set forth in the caption.
- 8. PetSmart, Inc. is a specialty pet retailer, is headquartered at the location set forth in the above-caption and has many locations throughout the country, including the location in Philadelphia, PA at which Plaintiff worked.

9. At all times relevant herein, Defendant acted by and through its agents, servants and employees, each of whom acted at all times relevant herein in the course and scope of their employment with and for the Defendant.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

- 10. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
 - 11. Plaintiff is a female individual.
 - 12. Plaintiff was hired by Defendant in or about August 2014.
- 13. In total, Plaintiff worked for Defendant for almost seven (7) years, until her termination in June 2021.
- Plaintiff worked for Defendant as a full-time Assistant Manager at Defendant's
 Roosevelt Blvd Philadelphia, PA location.
- 15. During the last few years of her employment, Plaintiff was supervised by Cathleen Downes, Store Manager.
- 16. Plaintiff was qualified for her job, as she possessed the requisite skill, education and experience to perform it.
- 17. Plaintiff performed her job satisfactorily and was issued positive feedback by Defendant's management.
- 18. Plaintiff developed great working relationships with her colleagues and was always willing to help in the store whenever it was needed.
- 19. In or about March of 2021, Defendant hired a male employee (Mike Crowley) to work as an Assistant Manager (the same position Plaintiff held) at the same location at which Plaintiff worked.

- 20. Mr. Crowley had much less experience, seniority and skill than Plaintiff and had not previously worked for Defendant.
- 21. However, Defendant hired Mr. Crowley and paid him \$8.00 more per hour than Plaintiff.
- 22. Plaintiff performed many more job duties/functions than Mr. Crowley and was able to communicate in Spanish with Spanish-speaking customers (as Plaintiff speaks Spanish). Crowley was not able to do so.
- 23. Plaintiff learned about this pay disparity because she was responsible for handling payroll.
- 24. In or about the Spring of 2021, Plaintiff expressed complaints to Ms. Downes, Lacey (last name unknown- District Leader) and Naomi Connelly (Corporate Human Resources) about the unfair pay issue, including telling them that it was unfair that a newly hired male employee with much less experience was getting paid a lot more than she was and that she felt that she was being treated unfairly because of her gender.
- 25. During this conversation, Plaintiff also referenced the Equal Pay Act and stated that she felt like Defendant was violating the law. Plaintiff asked that her pay be adjusted to be equal to her newly hired male colleague.
 - 26. In response, Downes was visibly annoyed and angry with Plaintiff.
- 27. Defendant did not adjust Plaintiff's hourly rate or otherwise pay Plaintiff the same as Mr. Crowley.
- 28. Almost immediately after Plaintiff made these complaints, Downes began treating Plaintiff very rudely (including but not limited to speaking to her in a rude, cold manner), scrutinizing her work (by, for example, accusing Plaintiff of failing to perform certain duties

despite that Plaintiff had, in fact, performed the duties) and falsely accusing Plaintiff of having an "attitude," which was untrue.

- 29. Plaintiff also observed that Downes did not treat Crowley rudely or with animosity. Instead, Plaintiff observed Downes speak to and interact with Crowley in a friendly and professional manner.
- 30. Downes' antagonistic treatment of Plaintiff occurred on a weekly basis from in or about late March 2021 to June 2021.
- 31. Plaintiff was offended and hurt by Downes' treatment of her, especially considering Plaintiff's lengthy tenure with and dedication to the company.
- 32. In or about June 2021, Plaintiff complained to Downes that she felt like Downes was harassing her because she complained about gender discrimination and unequal pay.
 - 33. In response, Downes failed to address or resolve the issue.
- 34. On or about June 25, 2021, Plaintiff then contacted Ms. Connelly again and informed her that Downes was harassing her and retaliating against her because she complained about unfair pay/gender discrimination.
- 35. During this discussion, Plaintiff also told Connelly that if Downes did not stop harassing/discriminating against her, she might resign in three months when their colleague returned from maternity leave.
- 36. Ms. Connelly then asked Plaintiff whether she would consider transferring to another location.
- 37. Plaintiff told Ms. Connelly that she would think about it but that she preferred to stay in the store at which she was working because she had been there for many years and had good relationships with the customers and employees (aside from the issues with Downes).

- 38. Later that day, on or about June 25, 2021, Plaintiff had another discussion with Downes during which she told Downes that she thought Downes was harassing her ever since she raised the equal pay concerns and that if Downes did not stop harassing her, she may resign in three months when their colleague returned from maternity leave.
- 39. Plaintiff did not tell Downes she was resigning, did not tender her resignation, did not quit or otherwise voluntarily stop working for Defendant.
- 40. She merely conveyed to Connelly and then Downes that if Downes did not stop harassing/retaliating against her, she may be forced to resign.
- 41. Plaintiff made these statements in the context of her complaints of discrimination and retaliation.
- 42. Immediately upon Plaintiff's final complaint of discrimination to Downes, Downes told Plaintiff that she was "accepting" Plaintiff's alleged "resignation."
- 43. In response, Plaintiff told Downes that she did not resign or quit and that she was going to continue to perform her job.²
- 44. Downes demanded Plaintiff's keys and told her to go sit in the breakroom. Plaintiff complied but reiterated that she did not quit or resign.
- 45. Plaintiff then sent a text message to Lacey (Defendant's District Leader) explaining that Downes was claiming she quit when she never did so.
 - 46. Plaintiff sat in the breakroom for 1-2 hours waiting for HR to respond to this issue.

² Accepting Defendant's faulty logic, an employee could illegally be retaliated against and claimed to resign anytime they say "I can't work in this environment," "this has to stop, or I'm going to quit," "I can't work under these conditions," etc... - - all in the context of trying to raise legitimate discrimination or illegal harassment claims to an employer. Under no interpretation of the law is this an actual resignation. Instead, it constitutes an employer refusing to correct unlawful conditions, refusing to investigate, and engaging in retaliation by claiming such a complaint is a resignation.

- 47. HR then contacted Plaintiff and told her that they were treating her as having verbally resigned and would be sending her a severance agreement.
- 48. Plaintiff was then sent an unsolicited severance agreement which required her to waive all legal claims against Defendant.
- 49. To Plaintiff's knowledge, Defendant's policies/practices do not require the offer of severance and offering them is not a standard or usual practice.
- 50. Plaintiff was then forced to leave the workplace and told she could not return to work.
- 51. Thus, Plaintiff was terminated by Defendant within hours of making final complaints of discrimination to Defendant.
- 52. After she was terminated, Plaintiff's work was performed by Crowley (male employee).
- 53. Plaintiff believes and therefore avers that she was subjected to a hostile work environment and terminated because of her (1) her gender; and (2) her expressed concerns of gender discrimination and unequal pay.

COUNT I

Violations of Title VII

([1] Gender Discrimination (Hostile Work Environment and Wrongful Termination); [2] Unequal Pay; and [3] Retaliation)

- 54. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 55. Plaintiff was treated disparately with respect to the terms and conditions or her employment, her compensation and termination contrary to her male colleagues.
- 56. Plaintiff complained to Defendant about gender discrimination, including on the very day of her termination.

- 57. After Plaintiff was terminated, her work was performed by a male employee.
- 58. Plaintiff believes and therefore avers that she terminated from her employment with Defendant because of her (1) her gender and/or (1) her complaints of gender discrimination and unequal pay.
- 59. These actions as aforesaid constitute unlawful discrimination and retaliation under Title VII.

COUNT II <u>Violations of 29 U.S.C. § 206 and 29 U.S.C. § 215(a)(3) [the Equal Pay Act - "EPA"]</u> (Discrimination & Retaliation)

- 60. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 61. Plaintiff was not properly paid an equal hourly rate/salary compared to her male counterparts despite the fact that, upon information and belief, Plaintiff's experience, skills, and seniority were the same, similar, or better than said male counterparts.
- 62. Plaintiff complained to Defendant hat she believed she was not being paid the same or similar salary and/or other employment benefits as her male counterparts because of her gender.
- 63. Plaintiff's aforesaid complaints under the Equal Pay Act were never properly investigated or resolved by Defendant's management.
- 64. Instead, Plaintiff was retaliated against and terminated for complaining of unequal pay based upon her gender.
- 65. These actions as foresaid constitute violations of 29 U.S.C. § 206 and 29 U.S.C. § 215(a)(3).

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that this Court enter an Order providing that:

A. Defendant is to promulgate and adhere to a policy prohibiting discrimination in the

future against any employee(s);

B. Defendant is to compensate Plaintiff, reimburse Plaintiff, and make Plaintiff whole

for any and all pay and benefits Plaintiff would have received had it not been for Defendant's

illegal actions, including but not limited to back pay, front pay, salary, pay increases, bonuses,

insurance, benefits, training, promotions, reinstatement and seniority;

C. Plaintiff is to be awarded liquidated and/or punitive damages, as permitted by

applicable law, in an amount believed by the Court or trier of fact to be appropriate to punish

Defendant for its willful, deliberate, malicious and outrageous conduct and to deter Defendant or

other employers from engaging in such misconduct in the future;

D. Plaintiff is to be accorded other equitable and legal relief as the Court deems just,

proper and appropriate (including but not limited to damages for emotional distress, pain, suffering

and humiliation; and

E. Plaintiff is to be awarded the costs and expenses of this action and reasonable

attorney's fees as provided by applicable federal and state law.

Respectfully submitted,

KARPF, KARPF & CERUTTI, P.C.

By:

Ari R. Karpf, Esq. Jeremy M. Cerutti, Esq.

3331 Street Rd.

Two Greenwood Square, Suite 128

Bensalem, PA 19020

(215) 639-0801

Dated: January 14, 2022

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

Nancy Davil v.	a :	CIVIL ACTION	
Petsmart, Inc. d/b/a	a Petsmart	NO.	
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a) Habeas Corpus – Cases b	rought under 28 U.S.C. § 2	241 through § 2255.	
b) Social Security - Cases re and Human Services den	equesting review of a decisi ying plaintiff Social Securit	on of the Secretary of Health y Benefits.	()
c) Arbitration - Cases requi	red to be designated for arbi	itration under Local Civil Rule 53.2.	()
d) Asbestos – Cases involvi exposure to asbestos.	ng claims for personal injur	y or property damage from	()
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1/14/2022	Attorney at law	Plaintiff Attorney for	· ·
)ate	Attorney-at-law	Attorney for akarpf@karpf-law.com	
(215) 639-0801	(215) 639-4970	akai pitukai pi-iaw.com	

FAX Number

E-Mail Address

(Civ. 660) 10/02

Telephone

Case 2:22-cv-00171-GENERO POCKETORISTRICF DESCRIPTION PAGE 11 of 12 FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

DESIGNATION FORM

(to be used by counsel or pro se plaintiff to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to the appropriate calendar)

Address of Plaintiff: 557 Lindley Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19120	y me case jes me p p. z.z. e, z.z.z.g.	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,				
Address of Defendant: 1745 W. Bethany Home Road, Phoenix, AZ 85015						
Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction: Defendant's place of business						
RELATED CASE, IF ANY:		D . M . 1 . 1				
		Date Terminated:				
Civil cases are deemed related when Yes is answered to any of the following	•					
 Is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pend previously terminated action in this court? 						
2. Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same trapending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?	ansaction as a prior suit	Yes No X				
3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already numbered case pending or within one year previously terminated action	Yes No X					
4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro se civil rights Yes No X						
I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case is / is not related to any case now pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court except as noted above.						
DATE: 1/14/2022	Service service services and service service and service servi	ARK2484 / 91538				
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Case 2:22-cv-00171-GEKP Document 1 Filed 01/14/22 Page 12 of 12 CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as

purpose of initiating the civil d	t. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference cocket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE O	OF THIS FORM.)		ic Clerk of Court for the		
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS			DEFENDANTS			
DAVILA, NANCY		PETSMART, IN	IC. D/B/A PETSMART			
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Philadelphia (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)		County of Residence	of First Listed Defendant	Maricopa		
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(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, A	Address, and Telephone Number)	Attorneys (If Known)				
1 ' 1 '	P.C.; 3331 Street Road, Two Greenwood	1 1				
Suite 128, Bensalem, PA	A 19020; (215) 639-0801; akarpf@karpf-	-law.com				
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	ICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)	III. CITIZENSHIP OF P	RINCIPAL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintif		
1 U.S. Government X 3 Federal Question		(For Diversity Cases Only)	TF DEF	and One Box for Defendant) PTF DEF		
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IV. NATURE OF SUIT CONTRACT	(Place an "X" in One Box Only) TORTS	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	of Suit Code Descriptions. OTHER STATUTES		
□ 110 Insurance □ 120 Marine □ 130 Miller Act □ 140 Negotiable Instrument □ 150 Recovery of Overpayment Œ Enforcement of Judgment □ 151 Medicare Act □ 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans Œ (Excludes Veterans) □ 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits □ 160 Stockholders' Suits □ 190 Other Contract □ 195 Contract Product Liability □ 196 Franchise □ 210 Land Condemnation □ 220 Foreclosure □ 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment □ 240 Torts to Land □ 245 Tort Product Liability □ 290 All Other Real Property	PERSONAL INJURY ' 310 Airplane ' 315 Airplane Product Liability ' 320 Assault, Libel & Slander ' 340 Marine ' 345 Marine Product Liability ' 350 Motor Vehicle ' 355 Motor Vehicle ' 360 Other Personal Injury ' 360 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice CIVIL RIGHTS 440 Other Civil Rights 441 Voting 343 Housing/ Accommodations 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other 448 Education 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability 367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury - Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Personal 17 Truth in Lending 385 Property Damage 385 Property	RY 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 690 Other 690 Other 710 Fair Labor Standards Act 720 Labor/Management Relations 740 Railway Labor Act 751 Family and Medical Leave Act 790 Other Labor Litigation 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act IMMIGRATION 462 Naturalization Application	' 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 ' 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 PROPERTY RIGHTS 820 Copyrights 830 Patent 835 Patent - Abbreviated New Drug Application 840 Trademark SOCIAL SECURITY ' 861 HIA (1395ff) 862 Black Lung (923) ' 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) 864 SSID Title XVI ' 865 RSI (405(g)) FEDERAL TAX SUITS 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	□ 375 False Claims Act ' 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) □ 400 State Reapportionment □ 410 Antitrust □ 430 Banks and Banking □ 450 Commerce □ 460 Deportation □ 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations □ 480 Consumer Credit □ 490 Cable/Sat TV □ 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange □ 890 Other Statutory Actions □ 891 Agricultural Acts □ 893 Environmental Matters □ 895 Freedom of Information Act □ 896 Arbitration □ 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision □ 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes		
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	DN Brief description of cause: Violations of Title VII, EPA, PHRA	A and the PFPO.				
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.	N DEMAND \$	CHECK YES only JURY DEMAND	r if demanded in complaint: XYes 'No		
VIII. RELATED CASS	E(S) (See instructions): JUDGE		DOCKET NUMBER			
DATE 1/14/2022	SIGNATURE OF AT	ORNEY OF RECORD				
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